

The Messenger

Volume 1988
Issue 1 *Messenger* 1988

Article 34

1988

Messenger 1988

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarship.richmond.edu/messenger>

 Part of the [Fiction Commons](#), [Illustration Commons](#), [Nonfiction Commons](#), [Photography Commons](#), and the [Poetry Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

(1988) "Messenger 1988," *The Messenger*: Vol. 1988 : Iss. 1 , Article 34.
Available at: <https://scholarship.richmond.edu/messenger/vol1988/iss1/34>

This Complete Issue is brought to you for free and open access by the University Publications at UR Scholarship Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Messenger by an authorized editor of UR Scholarship Repository. For more information, please contact scholarshiprepository@richmond.edu.

The Messenger 1988

UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND
FEB 3 1989
LIBRARY

UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND
FEB 3 1989
LIBRARY



The Messenger

1988

UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND

FEB 3 1999

LIBRARY

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF:

C. Bradley Jacobs

ASSOCIATE EDITOR:

Mike Liebman

STAFF:

Lisa Ashman

David Clark

Marirose Coulson

Karen Golembeski

Raymond Haithcock

Kristina Krider

Eileen Lynch

James McNamara

Alisa Mayor

Jon Paulette

Scott Rooney

Ellen Tobin

Kathleen Wong

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The staff and editors would like to thank the following for their help in creating The Messenger of 1988:

Richmond, Westhampton and E. Claiborne Robins School of Business Student Government Associations
T. C. Williams School of Law
The Margaret Owen Finck Prize for Creative Writing
The Margaret Haley Carpenter Prize for Poetry
Areopagus
The University of Richmond Controller, and Board of Publications

Special thanks to Mary Fehm for her time and generous help with the computer layout.

Judging of art and literature was done by:

Suzanne Jones, Steven Barza, Louis Tremaine - prose
Dona Hickey, Gary Gunter, Alan Loxterman - poetry
Ephraim Rubenstein - artwork

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FICTION

Happy Birthday	David Blaschke	12
I Remember the Lightning Too	Phyllis Dales Davis	34
At Home, At Sea	Marjorie Judd	42
The Tequila Sunrise †	Ben Vance	55

POETRY

Gliding	Janine M. Hummel	7
Insufficient Evidence	Kelly Corrigan	8
Bite The Wax Tadpole	C. Bradley Jacobs	10
Wheel Away From My Sigh	Mike Liebman	19
A Little Mud For His Turtle	Jon Paulette	20
Mama, Who's Mr. Roosevelt?	Amy Crandall	22
Romans	Michael Almasian	24
A Glass Safari	Alisa Mayor	26
Country Mourning	Jon Paulette	27
untitled	Larkin	28
Amenities	Philip Hampton	30
Soul to Soul †	C. Bradley Jacobs	33
untitled	J.E. Bostock	38
Just An Observation	Y.H.N.	41
How I Know About the Colors I've Never Seen	Andrew Mason	48
Written on the tragic death of a soldier in Germany	Maj. Charles M. Herbek	49
vErTiGo	David Blaschke	51
untitled	C. Bradley Jacobs	52
Rock, Scissors, Paper. . . dynamite	James McNamara	54
An Envelope of Petals	Hao Zhang	63

ART

Jumpin' Jive	Jerry Hanley	cover
photo	Grace Brady	6
Newlywed Game	James McNamara	11
print	Patricia Keaveney	21
painting	Ephraim Rubenstein	25
photo †	Grace Brady	32
Duchess	Jeff Sagester	40
charcoal drawing †	Jerry Hanley	50
photo	Mike Beverly	53
mixed media	Scott Rooney	62

† denotes prize winners

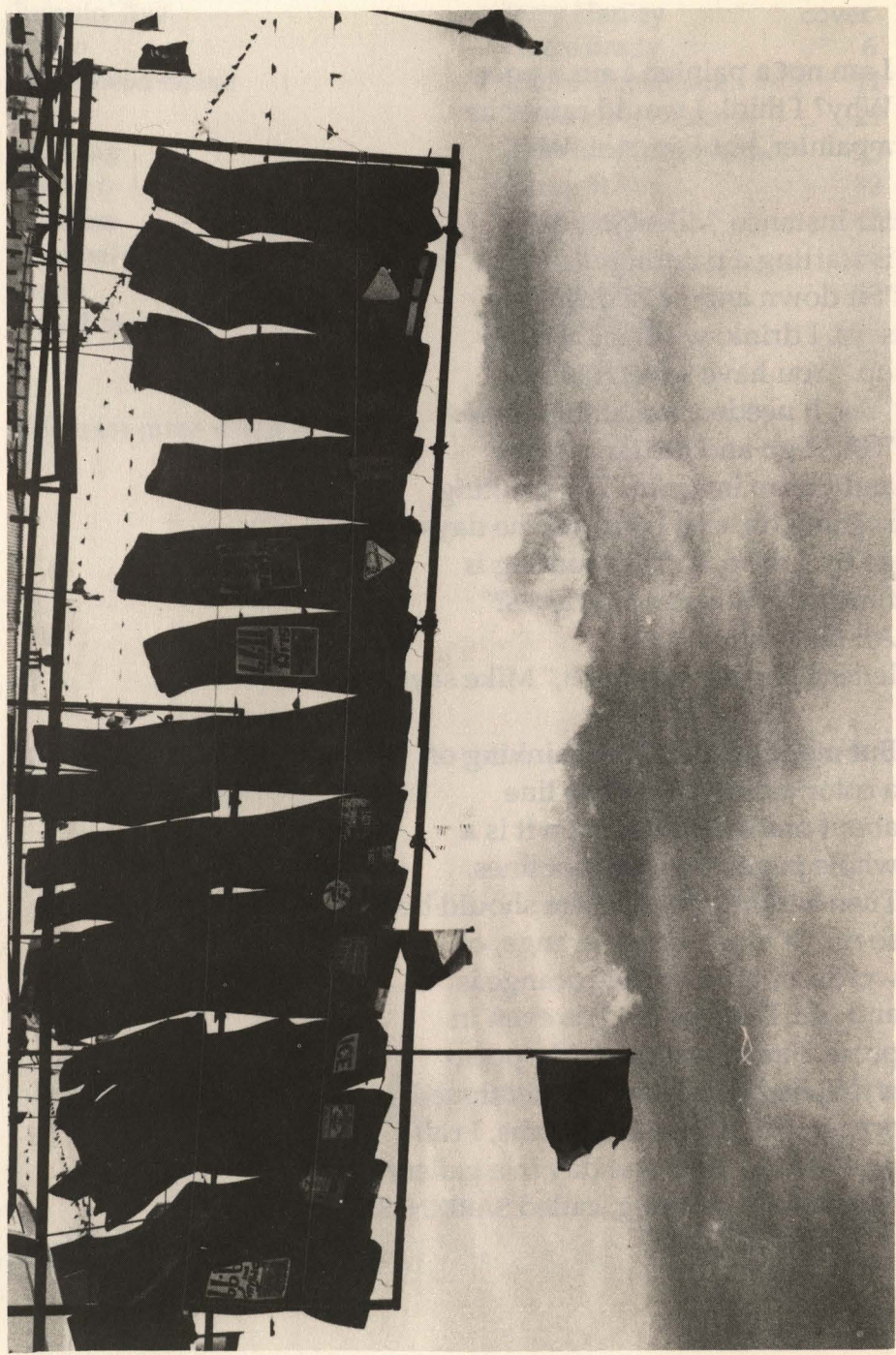
WHY I AM NOT A PAINTER

I am not a painter, I am a poet.
Why? I think I would rather be
a painter, but I am not. Well,

for instance, Mike Goldberg
is starting a painting. I drop in.
"Sit down and have drink" he
says. I drink; we drink. I look
up. "You have SARDINES in it."
"Yes, it needed something there."
"Oh." I go and the days go by
and I drop in again. The painting
is going on, and I go, and the days
go by. I drop in. The painting is
finished. "Where's SARDINES?"
All that's left is just
letters, "It was too much," Mike says.

But me? One day I am thinking of
a color: orange. I write a line
about orange. Pretty soon it is a
whole page of words, not lines.
Then another page. There should be
so much more, not of orange, of
words, of how terrible orange is
and life. Days go by. It is even in
prose, I am a real poet. My poem
is finished and I haven't mentioned
orange yet. It's twelve poems, I call
it ORANGES. And one day in a gallery
I see Mike's painting, called SARDINES.

Frank O'Hara



GLIDING

On silent wings
your tattered hair soars.
Rhythmic calves
force pedals
to defeat death.

Contained in an untainted ocean
are your thinned, beating eyes.
Your minds fold
above their rippling smoothness.

That seabird echoes
your wheels's glide.
She bears down
on prey, wind flattens her
zebra wingfeathers.

But you fly by,
arms lightly strangle handlebars,
and dissolve downhill.
Behind, windbreaker wings
flash red.

Janine M. Hummel

INSUFFICIENT EVIDENCE

It had been eight months
Since I swept up the remains
Of a shattered
Heart,
Or even just heard the passion in his voice.
And there I stood,
Thrilled,
To be poked and jabbed
With mad words and crazed fists,
But they were his words
 and his fists
And we were undoubtedly
Together.

In a blur of inebriation,
I remember next, with my eyes closed,
Something almost dreamlike,
 magnificent and
 indecipherable.

We touched
Released ourselves, without hesitation
 without caution
 without shame.

And lying in the melted resentment,
We pooled our nickles and dimes
To have a black man
In a black tuxedo
Deliver red wine
To the rented room.
We drank to renewal.

Continued

But
When the haze cleared
And my mind sobered,
There was no evidence,
No bottle,
No drips, spills or smell,
But a cork
Sat coyly
Probably laughing at me.

Kelly Corrigan

Bite the Wax Tadpole

You

couldn't hire somebody
to construct
suchathing
as

'Bite The Wax Tadpole'

.not even

poets

like

Wallace Stevens

and

e. e. cummings

stumbled

upon

stuff like

that

on a

regular basis

one needs accidents

mudslides

avalanches

of diction

to create

(

or to destroy

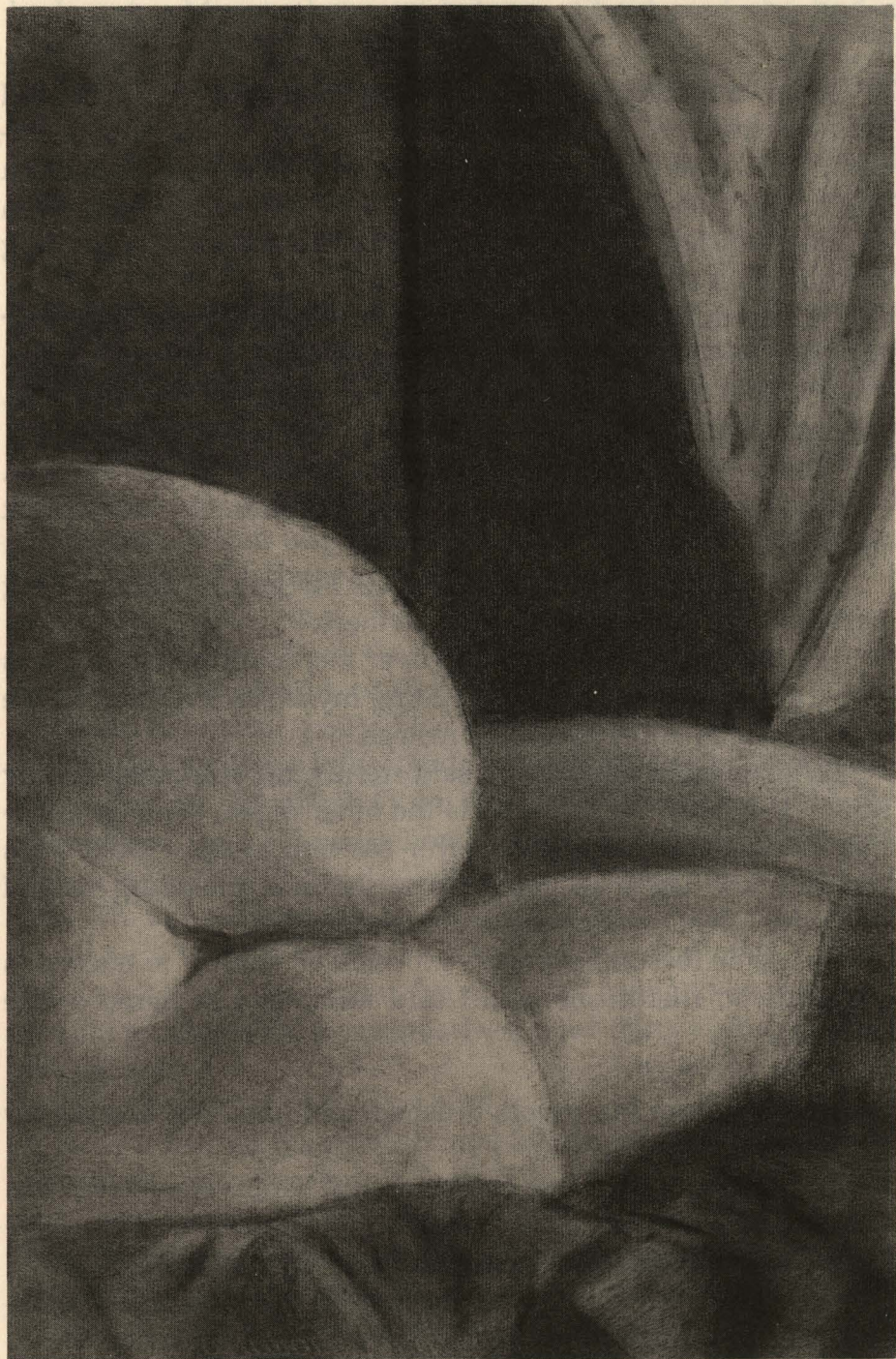
(the)

)

language

(in this manner)

C. Bradley Jacobs



and I wonder if who he had been talking about. I think
right. Certainly do the whole thing for his family and day

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

It was a Saturday, and I was a sophomore in high school. I was sprawled on the couch with a bag of chips, watching television, and I had one hell of a hangover. I heard the door from the garage open and close and my father walk in. Without even turning around I knew it was him. He'd been outside, pruning the bushes or something.

"Chris, don't you think you ought to start getting ready for tonight?" he said, walking into the kitchen.

I didn't answer. I could hear him fixing himself a drink. Probably a gin and tonic. That's what he always drank.

"Chris, did you hear me? I'd like to leave in about an hour. And do me a favor, put on some decent clothes. Try not to look like a slob."

I hesitated, then said, "I don't think I'm going. There's a big party tonight. Everyone's gonna be there."

My father was now standing over me, drink in hand. I was right, gin and tonic. I couldn't bring myself to look him in the eye so I stared at the television instead.

"Whoa, wait a minute," he said sternly, his voice a bit louder now. "I thought we settled this the other night. Your grandfather is very sick. You may never see him again. Today's his birthday and we're all going up to see him, including you. I don't think that's asking too much, do you?"

For some reason he always expected an answer to questions I considered rhetorical. Still I said nothing, just stared at the television.

"Well, do you?"

I got up from the couch, brushed past him, and headed for the kitchen.

"Where do you think you're going?" he yelled after me. "Don't you walk away when I'm talking to you!"

By this time I had reached the stairs.

"You know it's about time you started thinking about someone besides yourself!"

I wondered who he had been thinking about Thursday night. Certainly not his wife. Certainly not his family.

As I reached the top of the stairs I glanced into the master bedroom. My mother was asleep. She'd said she had a headache.

I went into the bathroom and flicked on the vent. My pipe was under the sink where I always kept it. There was still some weed left in the bowl from last night, so I took a hit, inhaled and blew the smoke toward the ceiling. My father was at the bottom of the stairs, yelling something about getting ready on time. I thought about Thursday night. Actually it was Friday morning, since it was well after midnight. I was awakened by the shouting downstairs. My parents were arguing in the kitchen, where they always argued, only this time my mother was doing most of the yelling. Something shattered, like a glass, then another. My heart beat faster. It sounded like a struggle. Mom yelled "You son-of-a-bitch!" and my father cried out in pain. Mom was sobbing as she came up the stairs a few minutes later. I assume my father slept on the couch.

My sister was 24 at the time and living on her own. My mother would always confide in her after a fight. She was someone to talk to. I called her on Friday to see what had happened. It seems my father hadn't been working late Thursday night after all. Mom called the office and there was no answer. She waited up. He came home drunk, not smelling entirely masculine. That's how the fight started. Mom hit him in the face. That's how it ended.

Now it was off to grandmother's house, as though nothing had happened. My parents were always trying to conceal their marital problems from our relatives, but I think everyone knew just the same.

Why'd the old man's birthday have to fall on a Saturday for chrissakes. Any day but a Saturday. Or a Friday. My weekends were sacred. I didn't even like the old man that much. I mean, we'd never had any kind of confrontation or anything, but I'd always found him cold, hard to get close to.

And he was a penny-pincher too. I remember how carefully he used to open his presents at Christmas, so as not to rip the wrapping paper. This way he could reuse it for the next holi-

day. I mean, how much does a roll of wrapping paper cost? \$1.50? \$2.00? Jesus. I remember my tenth birthday. I was talking to my grandmother on the phone, and I could hear him yelling in the background, "Put it in a letter, will ya! You're running up the goddam bill!"

Now it was his birthday, and I'd had to cancel my Saturday night plans to go see him.

Ever since I'd gotten my license my parents made me drive anytime we went somewhere as a family. My father was riding shotgun and Mom was sitting alone in the back seat. No one said anything for a while. The road was damp and the fallen leaves were matted to it. My headlights stabbed the darkness.

"You going to get your hair cut one of these days like I asked you to?" my father said finally.

I kept my eyes fixed on the road. "Yeah."

"Yeah what?"

"Yeah I'm going to get my hair cut," I said, irritated.

"When?"

"I don't know. Soon."

There was silence for a couple minutes.

"Oh no." Mom sounded worried. "Chris, I think I may have left the iron on. We better go back and check."

I sighed and started to slow down.

"No, we're late as it is," my father said. "We don't have time."

I hated being caught in the middle.

"Fine," Mom said. "Let the house burn down."

"No, I walked right by the iron. I'm pretty sure it was unplugged," my father said.

"You're right. Just forget it."

It was my father's turn to sigh. I clicked on the radio, trying to avert any further discussion about the iron. Zeppelin. "When the Levee Breaks." I knew the words and I started to sing to myself: "If it keeps on raining th-"

"Do we have to listen to this?" my mother interrupted suddenly. "It's giving me a headache."

"You heard your mother, Chris. She's not feeling well."

I started to say something but stopped myself, clicking off the radio instead. I glanced over at my father and wondered

how he was going to explain that black eye to his parents.

My grandmother seemed in good spirits, and she hugged each of us as we entered.

"Oh my God!" she exclaimed, pulling back from my father in mid-hug. "What did you do to your eye?"

"Oh, it's nothing Mom. I just hit myself with a two-by-four at the lumber yard."

Good one, Dad, I thought. I couldn't tell if my grandmother bought it or not.

"Oh my. Did you go to the emergency room? You never can tell."

"No, I think it'll be all right, Mom." Then, changing the subject, "Say, do you have anything to drink?"

"I can make something."

"No, don't fuss, Mom. I'll get it."

My father went to greet his father. Mom and I chatted idly with my grandmother in the hallway as she took our coats.

"Well, come see the birthday boy," my grandmother said, and we all walked into the living room.

"Hi Gramps. Happy birthday," I said, without much conviction.

"Happy birthday, Dad," my mother said. "You look good."

My grandfather smiled and said, weakly, "Thank you."

My mother had lied. He looked terrible. He was sitting in a big easy chair, propped up by pillows. He was wearing a plaid bathrobe, and blue slippers, and he was pale, and thinner than I'd ever seen him. Except for his lower legs, that is. They were black and blue and swollen to twice their normal size. What a difference two months had made. It suddenly struck me that my grandfather really was dying.

"Chris, can you c'mere for a minute?" my father said from the kitchen. I was glad for the opportunity to leave the room. I didn't know what to say to my grandfather.

My father had made four gin and tonics. "Help me bring these in to everybody, okay? I made one for you, too. Give it a try. I think you'll like it."

I handed one of the drinks to my grandmother and sat down. My father handed one to my mother. "No thanks," she

said.

"Oh come on honey. I thought you liked gin and tonic."

"I said I didn't want it, Ed."

"Okay, all right. I'll just set it down here in case you change your mind. How's that?" He paused and sat down. "So, how you feeling, Dad?"

"I've been better, I s'pose," my grandfather said, managing a slight smile.

"Well, you're going to get better. I know you are."

"We've been having some radiation treatment done," my grandmother said, optimistically. "The doctors say there's a chance it will help him."

"See that, Dad? You'll be all right." He paused. "Well I bet you're anxious to open your present, huh? Let's not keep you waiting any longer." He got up and brought the gift over to his father, then sat down again.

"Gee, I wonder what that could be," my grandmother said, smiling.

Everyone was silent for what seemed like ten minutes, as my grandfather struggled to unwrap the present. I didn't even know what we had gotten him. I wondered how many times he'd given me a present and not known what it was. Probably never. When he finally got the wrapping paper off he seemed puzzled.

"That's a cordless phone, Dad," my father said. "This way you won't have to worry about getting to the phone when Mom's not around."

"Oh, so that's what it is," my grandfather said, smiling weakly. "Thank you." He sounded as if he meant it, but his voice was so feeble it was hard to tell.

"You know, he gets so upset when I'm not here and he can't get to the phone when it rings," my grandmother said. "We'll get a lot of use out of that."

I looked at my grandfather. I felt so bad for him. I couldn't help it. Clearly this was his last birthday. He had just opened his last birthday present. I wondered how it feels to know that. He didn't even save the wrapping paper this time. What would be the point?

"Let's try it out." My father took the telephone out of its box

and plugged it into the phone jack. He dialed a number, probably our house, and said, "Yup, it works all right. Say, you don't have touch-tone service, do you, Mom?"

"What's that?"

"If you have touch-tone you don't have to listen to all those 'clicks' after you press a button. It just goes 'beep,'"

"What's wrong with the way it is?"

"Well, nothing. It just makes it easier to dial."

"It is easier," my mother said, "but I'm not sure it's worth an extra eight dollars a month."

"It's not eight dollars a month, honey. It's only about two or three, that's all."

"I think you're wrong, Ed."

"You think I'm wrong? Who pays the bills, anyway? I oughta know."

"Whatever."

"No, not whatever. I'm sure of it. Seriously, though, you really ought to consider it, Mom."

My grandmother was crying now. "I don't see what's wrong with the way it is n-now. That's the way we've always had it. We don't need that, that touch-tone."

"I understand that, Mom," my father said. "Don't get upset. I'm just saying that for an extra two or three dollars a month – and it is only two or three dollars – things could be a lot easier for you. That's all I'm saying."

"You do what you want, Mom, " my mother said. "But I think it's more than two dollars a month."

"Why do you keep saying that? I'm the one who pays the damn phone bill every month, don't you think I oughta know by now?"

Up until now I'd been silent, staring at my grandfather. He looked sad and confused. My parents, never at a loss for something to argue about, were ruining his last birthday party.

"SHUTUP!" I yelled, rising from my seat. "Can't you hear yourselves? Phone service! You're arguing over the fuckin' phone service! For Chrissakes, what the hell difference does it make!?"

There was stunned silence. I looked over at my grandfather. He, too, was starting to cry. I walked across the room and

hugged the old man. He didn't have the strength to hug me back, but it didn't matter. "Happy birthday" was all I could say. I just kept repeating it.

David Blaschke

WHEEL AWAY FROM MY SIGH

450 SL Mercedes-Benz shining black
guided by a blonde rouge slim golden
earring on both precious lobes
epitome of drinking a light beer and refusing
to be held tight because you're not an
untouchable you don't wear
fashionable black you're not
fashionably thin your mind
is always full of studious synopses
forgetting about the terrifying mud that
sneaks
up and under your rims and
stains
you and your whiteness
snaps
your head back to reality
makes
you cry inwardly as she
wheels infinitely away from your
sigh

sigh

Mike Liebman

A LITTLE MUD FOR HIS TURTLE

You were doing so well.
Had that girl. . .
(The blonde with the money.)
Two cars and a country house.
Until that unfortunate dalliance
With an aspiring chanteuse
Who looked good under the footlights
And was oh so energetic. . .

You woke up soooo hungover
Like the seven dwarves
Were hi-ho hi-hoing
Through megaphones in your head
Too many double scotches
And too little memory
Lying there sweaty on the bed
Beside a girl who was calling you "Baby."

"Well, honey, there was this girl. . ."
You hear yourself saying
To your dear wife and her lawyer.
As she glares and he takes notes
"I didn't mean to. . ."
The blonde thing sits up in bed
And you notice the makeup
That mixed very well with scotch.
You wish you'd chewed your arm off. . .

Nobody knew you at that bar. . .
You were just slumming
Getting a little mud for your turtle.
Getting some dirt on your shoes.
Sure beats blood on your hands.
Or a mark on your permanent record.
Or a skeleton in your closet
Just in case you ran for president someday.

Jon Paulette



MAMA, WHO'S MR. ROOSEVELT?

Mama and Daddy are out in the barn
milking the cows.

Big, warm black-and-white shapes
makin' funny noises all the time,
even when they crunch their feed.

I tiptoe over to the radio,
click the big knob and instantly
"Stella Dallas" comes into our living room.

High, lady voices like Aunt Hannah's
and low, men voices like Granddad Harp's
echo through the first floor

off the floors and ceilings, the stove,
the ice box and Mama's pots and pans.

I ain't supposed to have the radio on,
or even touch it, Daddy said, so I keep
it kinda low.

All of a sudden the voices are gone,
replaced by static and another man's voice
talkin' fast.

"Ladies and gentlemen,
we interrupt this program
for a special news report.
WQZF has just gotten word that
Franklin Delano Roosevelt,
the thirty-second president
of the United States,
has died of a cerebral hemorrhage. . ."

Continued

Roosevelt?

Mama and Papa knew him.
They always talked about him
at the dinner table.
Maybe he was their friend.

Anyways,
they'd want to know what I heard.
I ran out of the house.
The screen door sounded like a rifle shot
as it slammed after me.
The path to the barn was muddy
from yesterday's rain
and I slipped and fell.
My white knee socks were bunched
around my ankles and my legs
were streaked with mud.
Boy,
would I catch it when Mama saw me.

She and Daddy were talking
when I burst into the barn.
They looked at me,
surprised and alarmed.
I breathed in the sweet hay smell
as they asked me if the house was on fire
or if Baby was sick.
I repeated the radio man's words.
Daddy just sat on the milking stool
and covered his face with his hands.
Tears rolled down Mama's cheeks
as she took my hand to walk back up
to the house.
I grabbed her apron.
"Mama, who's Mr. Roosevelt?"

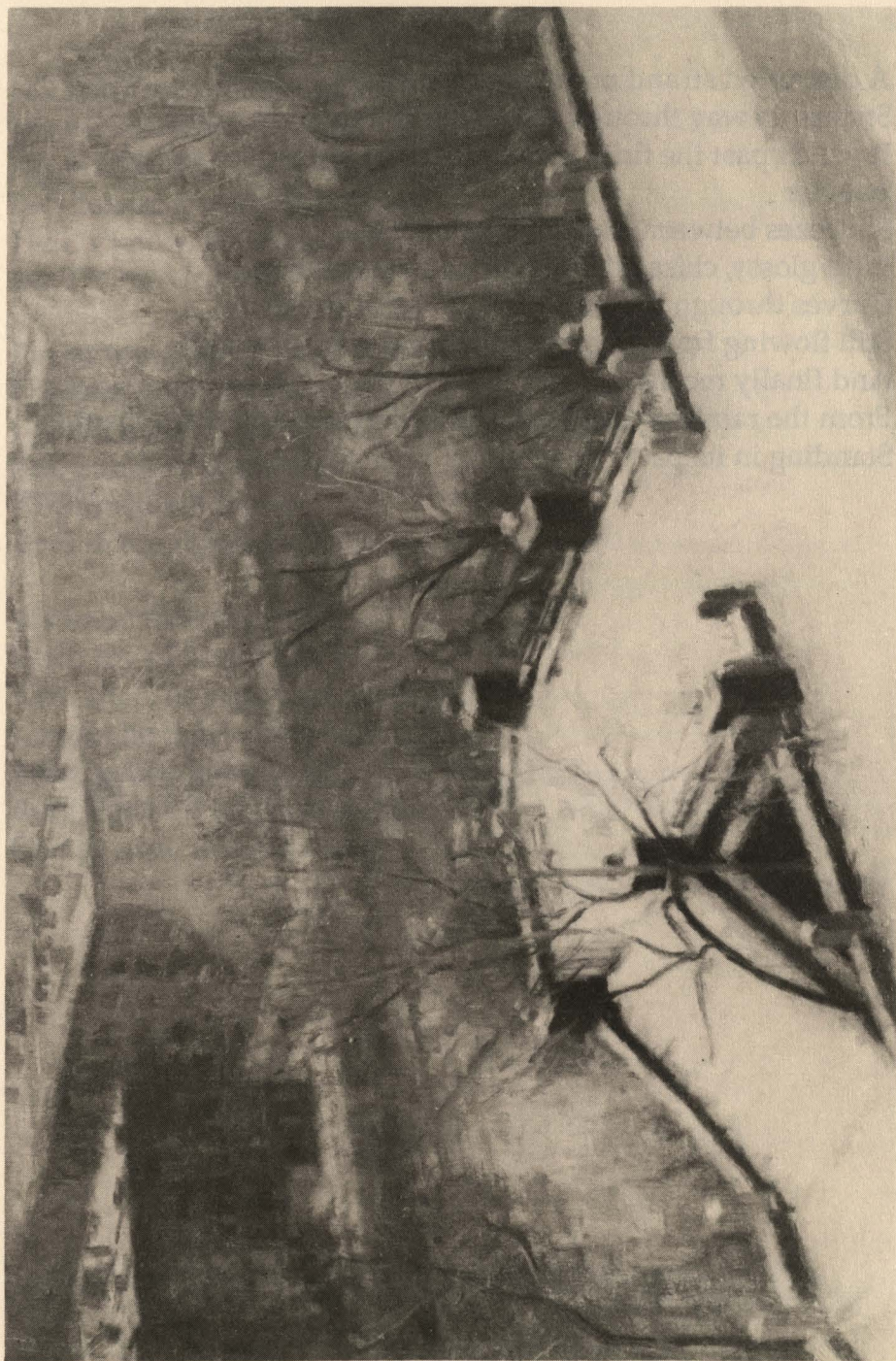
Amy Crandall

ROMANS

I walk along the bridge
I think
Romans
Didn't they see it coming
All this for water?
The size
The weight
All in stone

Curiosity in shadows
At first I am surprised
how heavy I feel
As I pick up speed
The wind whistles in my ears
I think
This didn't last as long as I thought it would
A final question
Should I smile or should I frown
Before I hit

Michael Varoujan Almasian



A GLASS SAFARI

A discarded strand of cultured pearls
Snakes its way through the plastic jungle on the dresser
It winds past the fine-sprinkled desert of jasmine-scented
powder
Squeezes between two tall lipstick trees
With glossy, chiseled buds of "natural dawn pink"
Curves through a turbid river of "earth fire red"
Still flowing from a crack in the glass volcano's neck
And finally recoils
From the rainbow-sparkling, multi-faceted crystal elephant
Standing in its path.

Alisa Mayor

COUNTRY MOURNING

My Baby left me here alone
My pickup truck is broke
My hound dog Elmer ate a chicken
Swallowed a bone and choked
Hell, y'know, I'd kill myself. . .
But I'm too drunk.

I'm running out of bourbon
I sucked down all the beer
I got sick off my barbecue
The puddle's in the rear
I'd prob'ly kill myself
But I'm too drunk.

My baby took the rifle
From my pickup's rifle rack.
Now that she's got that, well, hell,
I hope she don't come back. . .
I was gonna kill myself.
But I think I'll just take a leak
Off the front porch instead.

Jon Paulette

The castle (that I thought was made of stone)
supported only paper dolls

A King and Queen
with paper crowns
and paper clothes
with paper dreams
and a single paper rose

The King he loved his queen
and she him love did say

The castle (that the King thought was made of stone)
was only paper halls

One day the King
with scissors he thought were a chisel
cut the stone (paper) rose
and the Queen took it
and smiled
until she walked to the corner
and the paper (stone) flower down she lay

The King he watched
with his stone (paper) eyes
and felt his stone (paper) heart
Crack (tear)

The castle (that she knew was not stone)
was only a place for him to play with his paper dolls

The King then out his heart did
break (rip)
and try again to appease the queen

Continued

And she with all her paper heart
did try to join the two

But for the first time did she
learn the King
(whom she thought paper)
was truly stone

And the weight of the heart was too much
for her to bear
and thus she ran

And the King sat in his castle
and watched as it
crumbled (crumpled)
beneath his stone body

A true stone King
not paper, not a toy, without a heart. . .

Larkin

AMENITIES

There are others poorer
than us
and unclothed,
yet we bear the burden
of the lost flame,

crucify him.

I would have chosen the
criminal but not the prophet,

he of the heavy lids,
the bleeding side,

the end of ends,

my son,
why have you forsaken me?

A child through the night
cries,
the innocence of hunger,

a black man swings from
a rope,
in the back-woods,

the skulls of skulls.

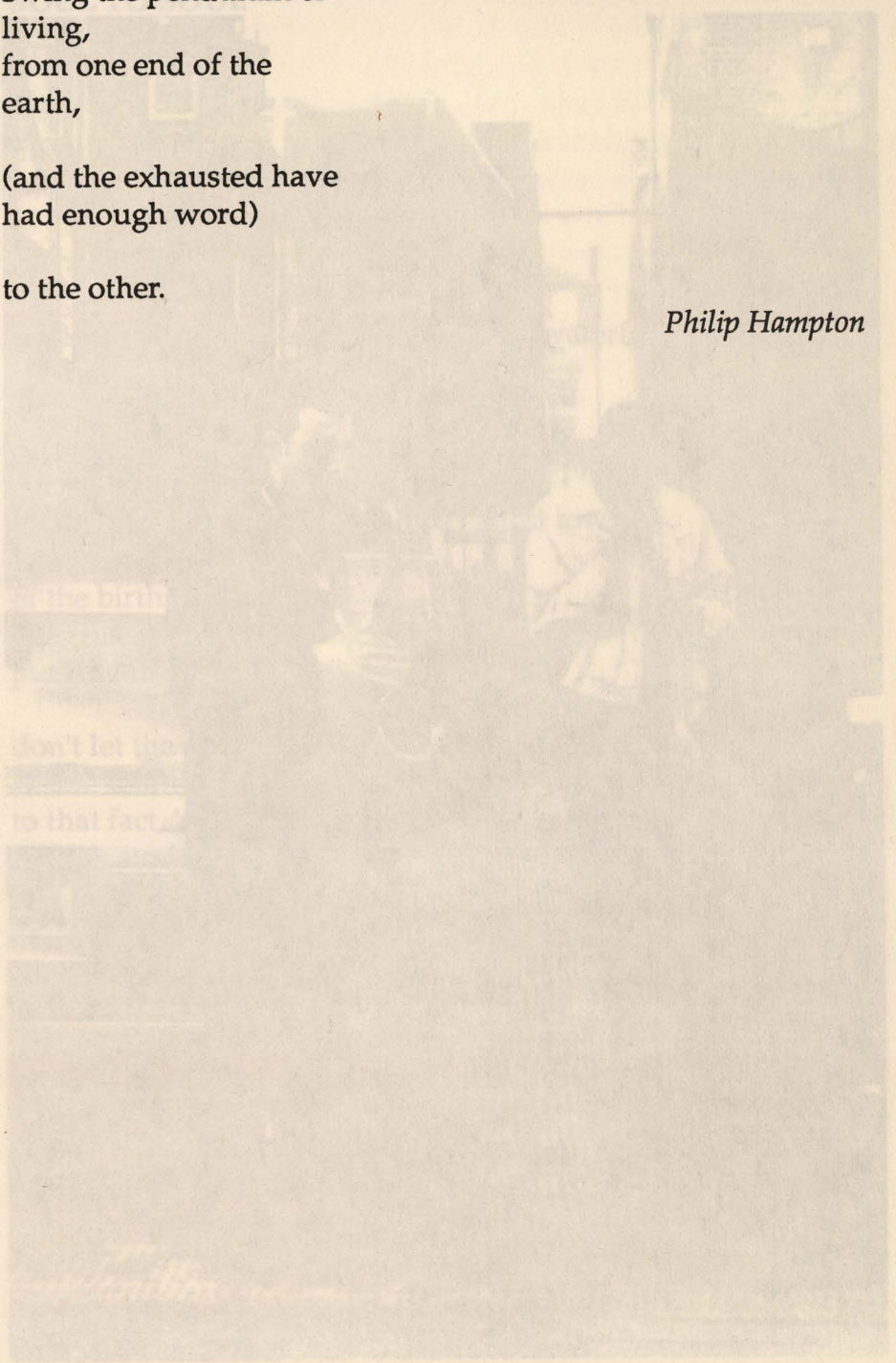
Continued

Swing the pendulum of
living,
from one end of the
earth,

(and the exhausted have
had enough word)

to the other.

Philip Hampton





SOUL TO SOUL

Fluid

may just be natural,
smooth enough
to give you a notion
of that boy's miraculous motions. His
twiggy lightnin' fingers
stroke that pure american axe, making waterfalls rhythmic
rockslides in comparison. The sounds are
all blue
country air and clear sky;
the passion a lead-spitting six-shooter
evoking the latent spirit of an old ghost town.
His eyes cry the sound
of the birth of the Blues
onto his listeners, bathing them,
purging their pain...

the pains were real, mind you

don't let the spontaneous modulation
or tale-tellin' jazz inflections blind you
to that fact, 'cause he'll
set you straight-
sticking one soulful note
after another into your
spine
until you beg to mingle your tears
with the sweat on the stage
and the round black pool that turns the world
at 33.3 rpm.

C. Bradley Jacobs

Winner of the Margaret Haley Carpenter Prize for Poetry

I REMEMBER THE LIGHTNING TOO

Larry and I have been driving almost four hours with only a few words passing between us. I don't feel like talking. Larry understands and is respecting my need for solitude. Looking out as the summer-green countryside flashes by, I sigh heavily, and then break the silence.

"Why did God do this to my father?" I ask, not really questioning Larry.

"He didn't. It's just a fact of life." Larry replies and resumes his silence.

Alzheimer's disease has my father in its grasp, and at the age of seventy he lives in a world where, most of the time, he seems terribly afraid. I wonder what he sees or feels that frightens him so. Then at other times, he has a totally vacant look. Somewhere in his mind exists a world that neither I nor anyone else can share. And only rarely now does he enter the reality of the world I know.

"Need to use the restroom? This is the last service station for a couple of hours," I hear Larry saying, but I don't bother to respond. I just sit listening to the almost dilent hum of the car engine.

"Sure you don't need to use the restroom?" Larry inquires once again before he pulls away from the service station.

I still don't feel like answering, and so I don't. What I really want to do is to turn the car around and pretend all is right with the world, but it isn't, at least not in my world. I don't want to think anymore, so I just sit staring at nothing in particular.

"We're almost there." I hear Larry say.

"The sound of Larry's voice has made me conscious of my surroundings, and just ahead I see the big white farmhouse where I grew up. In the past, coming home has been such a joyous occasion, but today it's about more than I can bear.

As Larry parks the car, I feel a knot getting tighter and tighter in the pit of my stomach. I open the car door, but my feet feel stuck to the floor. I really don't think I can move.

"Well, what are you waiting for?" Larry questions.

"Why are you so insensitive?" I snap as I become unglued

from what had seemed moments earlier to be a permanent position. In one swift motion I am standing outside the car and without even a pause deliberately slam the door with a thud. I begin to walk toward the house when it suddenly occurs to me that I don't hear Fluffy's bark. I glance quickly toward her doghouse, and I know.

"Mom has gotten rid of Fluffy. How could she do that without telling me?" I grumble.

Larry doesn't respond. He just kind of nudges my elbow in the direction of the steps on the back side of the house. Just as I mount the first step, I hear the door open. I look up and there stands Mom with both arms outstretched.

"You look tired," she says as she hugs me extra tight. One hug from her and all the disappointment and anger I felt moments earlier are gone. Mom has been a faithful companion and caretaker to my father. Throughout his suffering she has done everything in her power to make life pleasant and bearable for him. I had known for months that she could no longer care for Fluffy, who, like my dad, had grown old and sick. I am sure, without even asking, that Mom found a good home for my dad's shaggy friend.

Standing there in the warmth of my mother's arms, I momentarily feel peace. Mom knows I'm scared, though. She always has been able to read my every thought. She strokes my hair and pleads, "Why don't you rest tonight? You can see Dad tomorrow."

"No, I can't. I've got to see him now. Where is he?" In spite of my fear, I feel an urgency to rush toward my father's bedside.

"He's in the first bedroom."

With great apprehension, I walk through the dining room and then the living room. Much too quickly I reach Dad's bedroom. I notice the door is about halfway open, and I am relieved for I remember the awful screech it has made for years. It makes one of those irritating sounds like when you stretch the rubber ring around the opening in an inflated balloon and slowly let the air out.

With my heart pounding, I turn sideways and slide through the partially opened door. And there on the far side of the room is Dad.

I almost tiptoe toward his bed. I don't want to startle him. He turns his head in my direction. He knows somebody is in the room. The closer I get the more frightened he becomes. His breathing is heavy, and his eyes are watching my every move. I finally get close enough to lean over and gently kiss him on the forehead. He doesn't move, and I get the impression that he feels nothing at that moment except fear. Dad never was comfortable with strangers, and right now that's just what I am – a stranger to my own father. It grieves me to see how thin he's become. As I seat myself beside his bed, I notice his hair is neatly combed: his gray and blue-checked pajamas are clean and freshly pressed.

Trying to hold back the tears, I swallow hard and then force myself to speak. "Do you know who I am?" comes out of my mouth, but "Daddy, please come back," is screaming inside of me.

He doesn't respond, and so I just sit quietly by his bed wanting somehow to make contact with the father who once lived inside the frail body before my eyes.

"Daddy, I've come home, come home to spend some time with you," I manage with a little more control over my emotions now.

But he still doesn't answer, and I notice that he seems both scared and confused. His brow is wrinkled, his eyes wide open, and his shoulders are pressing hard against the bed as if he is trying to retreat.

"Please, don't be afraid," I plead.

"Daddy, I'm scared too. You know I never have been very brave. Do you remember, when I was a little girl, how scared I was of lightning?"

His gaze now is faraway and uncomprehending.

I gently wipe the perspiration from his forehead and continue. "Well, I remember. I remember how you used to take me up on your lap in that big old rocker on the front porch, and while I buried my head in your chest, you'd hold me real close. At first you'd just rock, but then you'd begin to describe the beauty in every flash of light you saw dart across the sky. You made it seem like magic. Finally, when I couldn't stand it any longer, I'd slowly unbury my head. Then the two of us would

sit quietly and just watch as the lightning played hide and seek, you called it."

I reach through the rails running up the side of Dad's bed and place one of his paralyzed hands between both of mine. I want so desperately to hold him and to make his world peaceful once again.

I hear familiar footsteps approaching from behind and then feel the warmth of Larry's hand upon my shoulder. He leans over, pats Dad on the hand, and says, "It's good to see you, Anderson."

Dad moves a little, but he doesn't speak.

Without really looking at me, Larry says, "Your mother has fixed some cake and coffee. You want to eat some?"

"No. I'm not hungry. You go ahead. I'll join you in a little while."

"I don't want to leave Dad's side. I feel I must stay and somehow force him back into my world. Hopelessness eventually takes over, though, so I kiss his familiar forehead and whisper, "I love you, Daddy. Goodnight."

Turning my back, I start toward the door, but then I feel compelled to look over my shoulder. Dad has his neck craned forward as if listening to something special. I notice his eyes are bright and lucid.

"I remember the lightning too," he says.

I wait, expecting more. But there is only silence.

Phyllis Dales Davis

Happy Hanger horrors. Mrs. Lange and her stupid pile of
screwed-up
Drycleaning tickets (all my fault)
Turns to Nelson and claims:
THAT Jennifer of yours may be smart,
But she aint got one bean of common sense up in that there
noggin of hers
So Nelson turns to me and whispers (but J its so nice
Your absentmindedness cause absentmindedness is the
sort of thing
You just can't fake). It was the night EBrain Rackley blew into
town
With his ying yang pal named Owen
(Who painted me a picture) and Ed said to me
In the darkness of a parking lot "Owen really DIGS you"
And I thought to myself how touching this boy who seemed
Not to have a sexual nerve in his bony self.
But I knew each and every human being on this very earth is
pathetic so
I ran on home and cringed into the mirror at my now out of
control hairdo
Stared into the void of gay men, who
Stared at me with vengeance.
HERE. Have my twat.
(I'll even throw in one FREE box of tampons just TAKE it!)
They slick their hands along their necklines turn up
pert noses and
walk away.
I think
How sad these men are men
Who love each other and have no need for the fulfillment
of a woman.
They hate me. Really, they do.

Continued

I do the dishes now breaking first my favorite mug and
Yell SHIT! but no one's home to hear and then a bowl
Slump down to the cold kitchen ground where a sudsy
puddle waits
and cry
perhaps it's all the coffee?

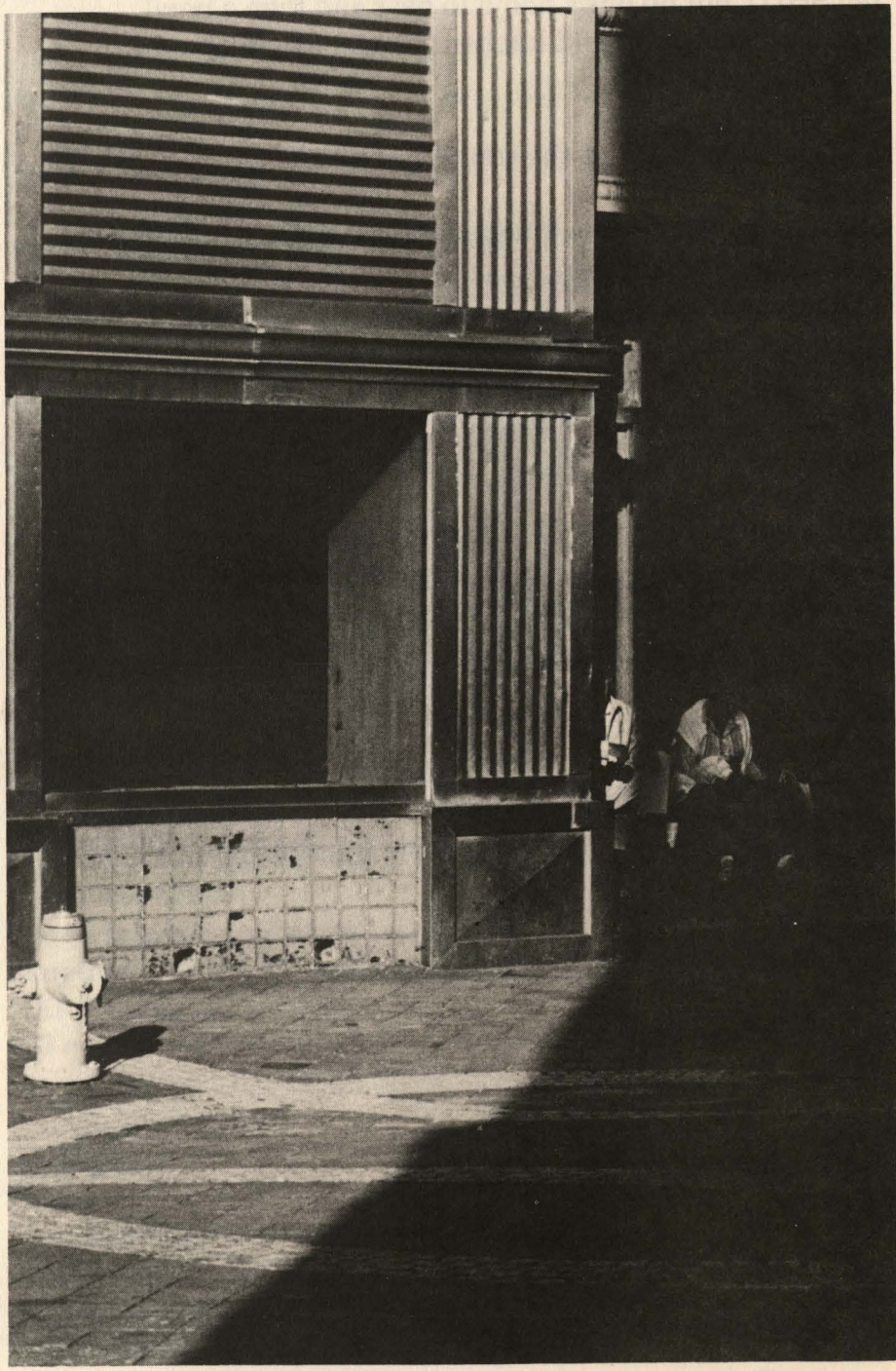
ENOUGH! Too many strange deformed and maybe even
imagined (but to me
terrificly painful and real) problems to face
Now that Ebrain's packed his bags and Cristopher grabs
my arm
We must cycle off to Cabbage Town to hear the Chowder
Shouters ONE MORE

TIME

Sitting on the swing I feel that all too familiar caffeine addict's
Goodbye zap syndrome lulling in my stomach
I close my eyes to Richard's approach knowing
My mere presence would become table talk at Jimmy's
squoze tight
The chains swung my feet
SMACK into his chest smiling to myself in pity
their timid existence.

J.E. Bostock

I do the dishes now, breaking first my favorite mug, then
You'll still find



Continued

JUST AN OBSERVATION

On the beach I speak of
There is a particular wave phenomenon
That no one can explain
But those who've dared to explore
Are familiar with.

A wave, any wave I guess,
Was not always a wave.
It begins as a ripple, a flow toward the sand.
This certain wave has a way of caressing,
Patting the sand,
Crawling up the beach.
It starts slowly, licking the land
And then the pace steps up
The waves are heavier, more powerful
But they pull away.
It is a teasing game, of course
The wave will return
Mightier, more overwhelming and uncontrollable
And the sand is helpless, a willing victim to the torture.

And then the phenomenon comes to its fruition.
The final, ultimate wave
Roars through the foreground
And comes crashing down,
Pounding the sand.

And the beach is weary with exhaustion
As the ripples begin caressing again. . .

Y.H.N.

He was alone on the boat. He thought he liked it that way. He was docking the ketch under sail. It was windy and the tide was ripping by but he was skillful, or just naturally at ease on his boat. The old dockmaster came out of the shed and looked at the sailor. The dockmaster had grey hair, steel blue eyes and his skin was aged by the sun and wind. He kept staring at the sailor. His eyes focused on the sailor as he neared the dock. The sailor tossed him a line and it hit the dock but the man just looked at the line as it slid off the dock and splashed into the water.

A black man who worked on the docks was sitting against a piling. He was half asleep with the sun on his face. He noticed the sailor and got up to catch his line. He tied the weathered lines to the cleats. As the sailor lowered the sails and tethered the halyards his hands looked dark and worn but strong. He had lines on his forehead and around his eyes from years of watching the wind. When the ketch was at rest he thanked the man for helping him and took a final look at the day. He liked how the water turned glassy and the wildlife settled down at the end of the day. He internally predicted the evening's weather and adjusted his salt-stained cap. His hair curled up around the edge of the cap as if it knew where to go. It was wind blown and looked unnatural when he combed it.

When he was satisfied the boat was safe he began to wash the day's journey from the deck. He removed his soggy shoes and poured a bucket of water over them. A few grains of sand flew over the deck and were now part of a land very different from their origin. Although he had longed for a home he remained on board because to him his ketch was his home.

The black man asked him if he needed to refuel sir and he replied, "I'd refuel if she had an engine but I never seem to need the power. Can I dock 'er here for the while?" But he didn't know how long he'd be there. He'd never stayed anywhere for too long. Land life was something he could only remember but something made him want to experience it for now and maybe tomorrow too. You see, this sailor was carrying something

deep within him. He knew a legend, a story his grandfather used to tell him back at the time of his first childhood memories. Was it true? There was no way of knowing now. Anyone else who possibly could have known was gone, he thought. But he still felt sharp pangs of guilt, for something he hoped was not true.

That evening he sat back in his cabin and thought about his life. He had had a few friends but they were long gone so he thought about himself. "Where am I going? What does life have in store for me?" He dimmed the flame in his lantern and squinted as he tried to look at the lights of the town. He could see people in their homes reading or eating dinner but he could not get a real feeling of what it was like to live there in that small sailing town.

This town was one that sensed any subtle change, so when the sailor walked down Morris street the next morning, he was noticed. He wasn't a tourist; he was thinking about staying. When he walked into Pope's Corner Store the creak of the door sounded different than usual. He paid for his coffee and some foreign coins got mixed in. He never got a "Thank you, have a nice day" from the cashier. When he left his eyes glanced back but he didn't turn because what he saw around him was more important to him than the reception he was getting. He saw trees with roots wrinkling the ground; the swaying of the trees in so different a rhythm. Some things reminded him of the sea; the rocking chairs on the porches and the swings that went back and forth. And the mothers' arms cradling their newborns were like the ocean rocking his ketch. Something was changing in him. He would always have the sea but he was drawn to the land and people now.

People. He was drawn to them but the people of this town were difficult for the sailor to get to know. As the days passed he realized that there were several categories of people there. There were the tourists who came and went, never leaving a trace; the local whites who never shed a bit of warmth to the sailor; and the blacks who for some reason welcomed the sailor as if he had returned from a long voyage.

As time went on the locals became accustomed to the sailor's habits. They didn't stare as long now and children

asked him silly questions when he sat on the wharf even though their parents still warned them to stay away from the sailor. The children asked him if he could swim fast and if he liked fishing – and he did like both, but he always made them go away when they became a nuisance. He was lonely but he kept an air of confidence and stability about him.

In a way he was famous – in this town. He was their "old man of the sea," thought of as quaint by the tourists. The locals never completely welcomed him but they liked him there. They kept their distance and just referred to him as Jake. He was good for business. People bought whatever tackle he was using that day and they ate lunch on the wharf to see if they could see what he saw on the horizon. But they couldn't.

Fall came to the town and the tourists departed but Jake remained. He acquired a routine that fit into the rhythms of the town. He rose, scrubbed the deck and headed down to Pope's for coffee with grounds in the bottom of the white styrofoam cup. Then he fished in the afternoon and scared the children on the wharf with spooky stories of the sea.

The days were getting shorter now but the rhythms of the town were the same. Boats came in; people meandered Morris street; the trees swayed; and boats went out. Jake liked Oxford. It felt more like his home now but there was an emptiness in Jake that convinced him that there was more to learn.

One day Jake was walking back to the wharf down a back street when he spotted a beautiful black woman in a garden. She was strong and proud but she looked so tired. Her back was bent at an aching angle. Her basket was full of tomatoes, squash, and onions she had dug up from the dry soil. Jake could not ignore her. He wondered who she was and why she was there. But as she turned her ebony face to look at him, he ducked behind a tree and just kept walking.

That night as he got into his hammock to sleep, Jake felt unsettled. He got up, put on his cap, and went to the Mast-head, a local bar. All the regulars were there and it was sufficiently late for them to be adequately drunk. Jake had had several whiskeys when he found himself talking to Plink, the retired captain of the ferry.

Jake knew all about Plink from conversations he had over-

heard on the docks. Plink was the localest local there was. He was part of the Masthead. Whenever anyone was there, Plink was there. Plink knew everybody in Oxford, except Jake, until that night.

Jake was in one of those moods in which he didn't care what he said. He needed an ear and Plink wasn't leaving his barstool so Jake started talking. He told Plink that he really liked Oxford but that the people seemed, well, a little distant. He remembered the blank stare in the dockmaster's eyes and the chill he got when he walked into Pope's that first day. Plink said they were like that with anyone who was not born and raised there. He said it all went back to this old legend they all believed in; something about some kid burning a slave ship, or something.

Plink began to tell that legend to Jake as if he had been there those days back in 1801.

"It was a big day for everyone; October 27th, 1801. Slaves were coming to the Eastrn Shore and the boat was due in from Africa. The square sails were spotted out in the Bay and the townspeople cheered. They set up the town square for the slave sale and finally the ship had docked. All the plantation owners and townspeople were ready to bid for a man to help them in the fields or a woman to do household chores. All except one, Jeremiah Tilghman."

"Oh God," thought Jake. "Plink's heard the legend. They all must believe it's true." Jake remembered the legend as his grandfather, Jeremiah, had told it to him years before.

"Something gnawed at Jeremiah inside. It made him sick to think of the beautiful black-sinned people becoming no more than animals. As the slaves were led slowly off the ship, their chains chinked on the dock. One African rebelled. He raised his chained wrists and tried to hit one of the slave traders. Several men immediately surrounded him, attacking the Negro. A man with a whip sent a blow to the slave's chest and he fell back off the dock into the water. Jeremiah ran to dive in and save the man but as he looked in the water he could see the slave's brown back rise to the surface. The slave trader said, "No sense you getting all wet for a nigger. We can make plenty of money without him. Let him float." A woman began to

scream hysterically when she saw the man in the water. She had lost her parents to traders and now her husband was senselessly killed. She had no energy left to grieve. She looked at Jeremiah with tired eyes, eyes that could no longer react to the sharpest pain, Jeremiah would never forget her face. He had never seen anything so cruel. His anger grew every second. The scene flashed in his mind over and over.

That night after most of the slaves had been sold, Jeremiah could not sleep, remembering the splash of the man's body in the water and the horrified black faces. He got out of his hammock and went down to the docks. He could see the lanterns glowing through the windows of the slave ship. He slowly boarded the creaky ship and found the slave's quarters. He raised his chin up to a small iron grate and saw their eyes brighten as they realized he was setting them free. He could see in the woman who had lost all her family that her only instinct now was to survive. She padded quietly down the planks and silently slipped into the water. Jeremiah remembered her sickening moan at the loss of her husband and the horrified looks on the faces of slaves who had been sold to separate plantations. Unconsciously he searched the ship and found the captain's quarters. His rage seized him as he unhooked a lantern and spread the flames over the deck. He did it again and again with every lantern he could find. Then he dove off the bow and swam as fast as he could, only glancing back once at the blazing ship.

The next morning he woke up face down on the muddy bank of a small island he didn't know. A muscular man grabbed his shirt collar and pulled him to his feet. Jeremiah had that sickening feeling again but now it was worse. Did they know he had done it? Did the men get out of the ship or had he killed them? At that moment Jeremiah's cause did not seem worth what might happen to him. The man put Jeremiah in his boat and rowed him back to the town square. Burned planks from the ship passed by in the water as the man rowed. In the town square several officials were surrounding a woman, a black woman, the one in whom Jeremiah had seen a flash of hope the night before. But now her eyes were open with a different emotion. The man took Jeremiah to the woman and

asked her, "Is this the one?" She would not blink or say a word until she felt the crack of a leather whip across her back. She blinked tears out of her eyes and they rolled down her cheeks but she never told the man that it was Jeremiah who freed them and set the ship afire. The townspeople could not prove it but they knew Jeremiah had done it. He had killed the most important founders of their town in a fit of confusion and rage.

Jeremiah went back to his home and tried to live a normal life. Several weeks went by. No one in the town spoke to him. He could not buy any goods in the town. He was outcast. One foggy morning before dawn he moved all his belongings, packed in a great crate, his wife and his son, who was no more than two years old, all onto his small boat. He sailed out of Oxford through the fog never to return."

Jake remembered every detail of that legend. He looked over at Plink whose eyes were shut and whose chin was propped up on his empty tankard. Jake slowly got up off his stool and walked out into the early morning mist. He went to a small cottage along the wharf. He knocked on the door and a beautiful black face appeared. The woman knew Jake and she knew his legend too. Her grandmother had known Jeremiah Tilghman. Jake took her hand and led her to his ketch. He untied the lines, hoisted the sails, and sailed out of the harbor. Plink woke up and noticing Jake was gone, stumbled out the door of the Masthead and onto the docks. As he wiped his eyes he thought he saw a woman seated by Jake's side in the cockpit. Plink just watched as the sails got greyer and blacker.

Marjorie Judd

HOW I KNOW ABOUT THE COLORS I'VE NEVER SEEN

Once again I realize, looking up at mountains, stars, a child,
how distant and far-away I am. I want to make lists, set goals.
But, this afternoon, windchimes, for the first time, seemed
out of tune.

Before me on every path, the Cherokee Warrior gazing indian
into my eyes.

My life is a lie. After every sound, a whispering Thomas
in my ear,

"You have glimpsed, you have seen! Has it been that long
you've

forgotten my face, dear? You must surrender dear. I'm assured
it grieves you."

I keep saying to myself: go join a monestary; BAKE BREAD.
Wear a sackcloth, for God's sake!

Or,

Build a rocketship.

Pierce the clouds, the clandestine God,
with a CLANG.

Or, "Live fast, die young, have a good looking corpse."

I'm still sitting in a plastic chair, molded for someone else's
body.

I think it's that simple.

At times like these I wonder why I even try. . .

Andrew Mason

WRITTEN ON THE TRAGIC DEATH OF A SOLDIER IN
GERMANY

his life soaks into the ground
it absorbs unmercifully
what was is no longer
how utterly futile
to die in the back lot of some
unknown, faceless, building
a child sent from home
to become a man
throws away that which is so important
to a man

the night is warm, a crimson pool beside him
silver specks dance in the blackness
that hovers about him
and that which flows from him
the stupor of Bacchus has forced him
through that window and the window
through him
so futile
so absolutely futile

Major Charles M. Herbek



Oh god, you're beautiful.
But your shoes. The heels are too high.
Here. Try these.
Please.
Yes, that's it.
Good. Perfect.
But your stockings. White will
never
do.
Nude? Yes, nude.
Good. Perfect.
But your hair. Your hair is all
wrong.
In a bun. Try it in a bun.
Please.
For me.
Here, look at me.
Yes, that's it!
Good!
Perfect!
Oh god, I love you.

David Blaschke

SEX

read the marquee
 over the exit
 as I left vulgar dreamful fits
 and sleeping,
 carnal possibilities debated
 dormant rudeness
 NO PRUDES

shouted the stage door.

My quiet repast introduced
 CARING,

not surprisingly
 etched into my reflections;
 conscience no sooner
 carved

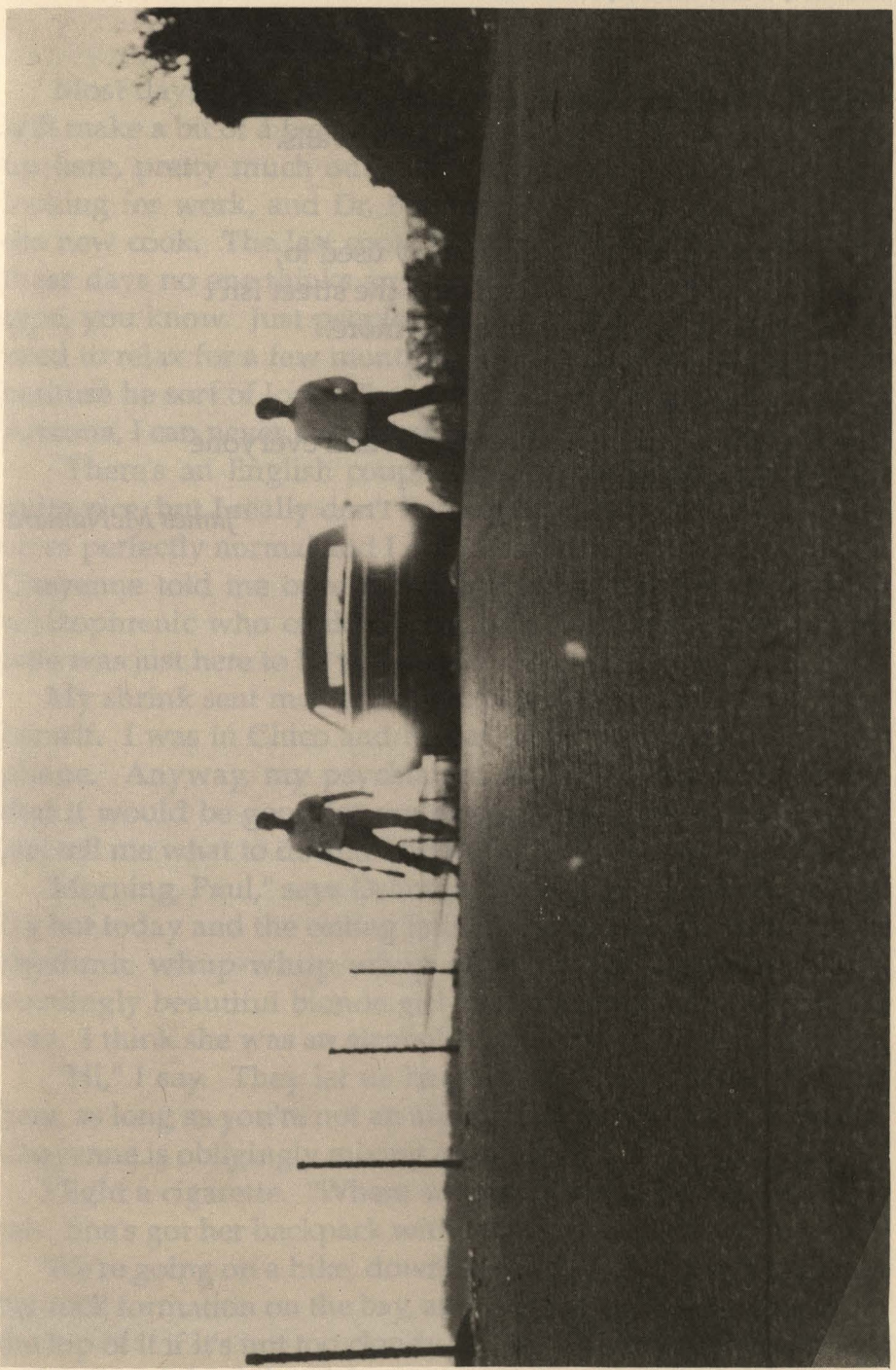
SENSITIVITY

about my rampant sensuality.

A quick nap blocked
 me from sleeping,
 thinking not only of you
 but you under me
 and the still-to-be
 -new warmth,
 nagged me to read a climax
 into your message.

(More
 I will act there
 than I should hope:
 to happen and see everything
 yet you embrace my writhing youth)

C. Bradley Jacobs



ROCK, SCISSORS, PAPER . . . DYNAMITE

Bubbles don't last forever, but they are non-toxic.
Fluorescent dinosaur tracks go up the walls.
Wilma, where is Dino?
Dead, like Mr. Hooper.
They just don't make jacks like they used to;
The balls don't bounce as high and the street isn't
Filled with Hopscotch Squares anymore.
In this game of hide-n-seek I am it;
Where is everyone hiding?
The streetlights of life have come on and everyone
has gone home except me.

James McNamara

THE TEQUILA SUNRISE

Most days if I'm late coming down for breakfast, Cheyenne will make a bit of a fuss, but nothing I can't handle. He showed up here, pretty much out of the blue, about two months ago, looking for work, and Dr. Bonner hired him on the spot to be the new cook. The last cook, Marilyn, was raped and shot but these days no one thinks any of us did it. We're not the violent type, you know. Just people who have had a bit too much and need to relax for a few months. I think they call him Cheyenne because he sort of looks like an Indian - either that or he's from Arizona, I can never remember.

There's an English couple here, the Stewarts, and they're quite nice, but I really don't know what to make of them. They seem perfectly normal and I can't imagine why they're here, but Cheyenne told me once that Mr. Stewart was a very wealthy schizophrenic who could afford to be here easily, and that his wife was just here to be with him.

My shrink sent me here after my girlfriend in Ventura killed herself. I was in Chico and he paged me and told me over the phone. Anyway, my psychiatrist told me I could relax here, that it would be good for me to get away. That's fine. People just tell me what to do and I do it.

"Morning, Paul," says Deborah, coming into the dining room. It's hot today and the ceiling fans are going full speed, making a rhythmic whup-whup-whup over the table. Deborah is a startlingly beautiful blonde girl from Connecticut who just got here. I think she was an alcoholic.

"Hi," I say. They let us have bloody marys with breakfast here, as long as you're not an alcoholic. I'm done with mine and Cheyenne is obligingly mixing another.

I light a cigarette. "Where are you off to today?" I ask Deborah. She's got her backpack with her.

"We're going on a hike, down by Las Cruces." Las Cruces is a big rock formation on the bay, and you can see Puerto Rico from the top of it if it's not too cloudy.

I nod and finish breakfast.

I have an encounter group meeting scheduled for noon, but

instead I go to help Mr. Stewart launch his boat. He's been working on the damn thing since he got here, building it with a bamboo frame and thatch, and as soon as it hits the water it starts sinking.

"Damn it!" Mr. Stewart screams. "Damn the boat to hell!" He's running around it, sloshing through the warm shallow water, trying to hold the damn thing up but it just keeps sinking. I wade back to the beach and watch him for a minute. I brought a canteen full of scotch and soda and pour him one when he comes out of the water. I can't escape the feeling we're being watched

"You know, Mr. Stewart," I say, "you don't have to build a boat to leave. Why are you doing it?"

He's sipping the drink out of a collapsible cup and squinting into the sun, his furry eyebrows crunched together over a brown face.

"Yes, of course you're right, I needn't build it," he says pleasantly enough, but he obviously doesn't believe me. Maybe they won't let him leave, I don't know. I drink quietly and watch the setting sun behind us play off the mountains across the bay. You can barely see them at dusk.

Mr. Stewart knocks on my door that night and slips in. "Come on, come on," he says, "get dressed."

I start to get out of bed, realize I'm naked, lay back down. "Where are we going?" I ask him groggily, fumbling for a cigarette.

"The boat," he hisses. "We've got to rebuild the boat. You're the only other one I can trust."

"Sit down, Michael," not even sure if that's his first name. He sits in a rattan chair and I puff on the Marlboro.

"Look, you know you can check out of here any time, right? This isn't prison." He isn't listening. I go with him finally.

The moonlight is fantastic on the water, rippling and shimmering on the gentle waves. I can see the water from where we are, on a hill behind Las Cruces. This is where we build the boat.

"Frame's very important, you know," says Mr. Stewart, grunting and sweating under a sheaf of bamboo poles. I nod eagerly, smoke from my cigarette stinging my eye.

"Late again," Cheyenne notes the next morning. Why do you stay up so late at night?"

"Reading," I say. "Reading a book." The bloody mary has too much tobasco. Deborah looks radiant this morning. She's hiking again, this time to the other side of the island. Mr. Stewart looks at me with relief.

Mrs. Stewart is a woman with an immense head of bright red hair and a lingering British accent. "Oh Michael," she says, "what are you doing today?"

"Nothing, dearest," Mr. Stewart says, sipping coffee.

"Well, I'm taking the day trip to San Juan. Don't forget to water the posies in the bungalow!" she advises shrilly.

"Of course," Mr. Stewart says.

The boat looks much less impressive in the daylight. Most of the day I sit under a tree and watch Mr. Stewart thatch palm fronds onto the frame.

"Don't you remember," I say, lighting a cigarette, "that the boat you built before, the same way, sank?"

Mr. Stewart wipes his red face with a rag and looks at me as if I just told him that the sky is blue. "Of course I realize that. But I'm doing something different this time." He starts back at his work.

There's a little seed in my drink and I spit it out.

That night, Mr. Stewart doesn't come into my room. I mix a drink, pour it in my canteen, and go looking for him.

The trail is a little rough when you get close and, just behind the actual clearing, goes over a pile of large boulders. I start up these rocks and almost fall right over Deborah. She squeals a little mouse sound.

"What are you doing here?" she hisses.

I put out my cigarette. "I could ask you that."

She looks down nervously, runs her finger in the dust on the rock, leaving a little trail. "I think he's marvelous," she says quietly.

"What?"

"I think he's marvelous. Don't you?"

I take a long drink, the tequila biting a little. "I guess," I shrug. I'm starting to realize that I'm practically lying on top of a very attractive girl, maybe twenty, twenty-two. She scribbles

in a notebook.

"You take notes?" I ask. Nothing surprises me anymore.

"Yeah, I do," she says. "I want to get it all down."

The next day Cheyenne gets me stoned behind the kitchen.

"I ever tell you about my mother?" he says.

No, God, no. "Yeah, I think." I laugh a little.

"Do you know about Mar – about Mrs. Stewart?"

"What do you mean?"

He runs a bony hand through long black hair. "She's great."

"I guess."

"No, man, I mean in bed. She's outrageous. Sexually, I mean."

I laugh uncontrollably. Cheyenne is concentrating on rolling another doobie.

"Really?" I say at last.

He looks at me, his eyes burning. "Hell, yeah. She can do things I never thought possible." He lights the joint, sucks in a long hit.

I go to the clearing again that night. Mr. Stewart is ready to reveal the secret to me.

"Tar!" he says dramatically, his hands dripping with great globs of the stuff. "Tar!"

"Tar," I repeat quietly.

That night we cover the palm fronds with tar. Mr. Stewart assures me it'll dry in the sunlight and make the boat waterproof. I agree, but still have the feeling we're being watched. I take a drink and decide not to tell him about his wife's affair with the cook.

"There!" Mr. Stewart says, smearing the tar on his shorts in long black smudges. The stuff is dripping off the boat and splashing the sand softly.

"Let's go," he says at last.

About a week later, the director, Dr. Bonner, catches up with me. I'm walking along the hot cement pathway to the beach, struggling with a beach chair, a portable radio, and a jug full of martinis.

"Paul, we missed you at this morning's session."

"Yeah, well, I'm feeling much better," I manage. He laughs.

"Well, it's not like getting over the flu, you know."

"Right, well, I'll, uh, be sure to make the next one."

He smiles, fairly beaming from this good news. We look at each other for a minute in a strange silence. Jesus, I think. What does he want now?

"OK, Dr. Bonner, well, I'm just going to go down to the beach now," I say, waving the chair a little. The jug of martinis weighs forty pounds in this sun.

"Oh, yes, I almost forgot. I got a telegram for you today." He hands me a crumpled piece of thin yellow paper, dug from his coat pocket. I surrender at last and deposit my gear on the walk.

"Thanks." He smiles again and stands as though waiting for a tip. I look up nervously. "Anything else I can do for you?"

"No, I suppose not. Well, I'll see you tomorrow morning. By the way," he says, scratching his chin and considering seriously the radio on the pathway, "have you ever thought about art therapy?"

"That's all right. I can't draw water from a well."

He laughs enthusiastically. "All right, all right, Paul, I'll be seeing you."

I read the telegram. It's from my lawyer. "Dear Paul," it says, "stop. I'm coming to pick you up on the 27th stop. Dr. Snodgrass informs me you have enjoyed complete recovery stop. We've got big deals stop."

Great, I think.

Late that afternoon, at the beach, Mr. Stewart approaches me. He's wearing dark sunglasses and a big floppy hat that covers his face in shadow. He sits down about five yards from me, never looking at me. "Pssst," he hisses loudly.

"What?" I say, looking at him. He grinds his teeth in mute rage.

"Don't-look-at-me," he whispers loudly, his voice almost cracking in anger. I quickly look at the breakers.

After a minute, he whispers again. "Don't look at me. Say nothing. Tonight we go."

"What do you mean, 'we'?" I whisper, always looking forward. I take another sip of martini.

"I have been today to see the Sea Lion," he says.

"What the hell is Sea Lion, your fucking raft?" I start laughing. "Jesus Christ, Mr. Stewart."

"Don't use my name," he says out loud, looking at me. He quickly averts his head and bites his finger, cursing himself.

"Don't say anything else. Meet me there tonight at midnight." He waits a few minutes in silence. Just as I am about to offer him a martini, he rises and walks away.

There is a rustling in the trees behind me. I turn around just in time to see a hint of white and a flash of long blonde hair.

Inevitably, I am drawn, as I knew I would be, to the clearing, where the boat sits, the tar on its sides hardened to a thick black seal. I can't believe it worked.

Mr. Stewart appears from behind a palm tree and quickly walks over to me, extending his hand.

"Excellent, excellent, Paul, glad you could make it.." I give him my hand and he pumps it with vigor, grinning broadly.

"One thing, Michael," I say. "I'm not going."

"I know that," he says as though it's obvious. "I just said that on the beach in case she was listening."

"Who?"

"You know. Her. Deborah. She's been spying on me." I'm impressed. He knows. "I looked into her room one day and found sophisticated listening gear. Bugs, high-impedance microphones, cassette recorders. She's up to something."

"Possibly communist," I note, biting my lip to keep from giggling.

He nods knowingly.

"Very well then," he says. "Let's get it going, shall we?" We stand on opposite sides of the boat and slowly push it through the trees until we break the treeline and are on the beach. We stand there for a second, heaving and sweating. The humid night is bearing down heavily. I've got to quit smoking, I think. A little more effort and we're at the waterline. I can see Puerto Rico across the water, dimly shining. Mr. Stewart is surveying it.

"There it is," he says quietly. "Freedom." We stand in silence for a second.

"Well then old chap, I'm off. Give us a push, will you? Jolly good show." He climbs into the boat and I lean into it with

all my might, finally sliding the behemoth into the lapping waves. Mr. Stewart brandishes a paddle and begins slapping it into the water.

"Tally-ho, old boy!" he yells into the night. "Until we meet again!"

Deborah leaps from the trees and begins filming his departure with an impressive videotape camera.

"Debo-"

"Shut up! He's still talking!" she says. Mr. Stewart's wild laughter and unintelligible praise to the sea gods is drifting across the phosphorescent sea to us. I start to laugh.

"Will you be quiet?"

I shake my head, laughing harder. Dr. Bonner appears from the trees too, now, as if by magic. I'm rolling in the sand, almost in tears.

"See?" Deborah shrieks. "I told you he would! But you didn't listen, you prick!"

Dr. Bonner is shaking his head in disbelief. I just cannot stop laughing. Out there on the open blue dark sea, Mr. Stewart has finally made good his escape, leaving on a trail maniacal laughter and hymns and sailing off into the tequila sunrise of his golden years.

Ben Vance

**Winner of the Margaret Owen Finck Prize for
Creative Writing**



Well then old chap, let off. Give us a jolly good show. He dived into the boat and I lean into it with

AN ENVELOPE OF PETALS

When the mail-cart comes in the valley,
I send an envelope of petals
To tell a girl living in the city
That the flowers have blossomed.

Hao Zhang

A NOTE ON THE TEXT

This edition of *The Messenger* was set and laid out on the Apple Macintosh SE by the editors and Mary Fehm, Editor-in-Chief of the university's 1987-88 *Collegian*. This is the first edition for which these tasks have been performed by students, and the first time they have been done on a PC. The text was processed on MacWrite, and arranged using the desktop publishing program QuarkXPress. The book was printed and bound by Hauke Press, Richmond, VA. The typeface of the book is Palatino, which was chosen for its readability as well as its attractiveness.

UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND

FEB 3 1989

LIBRARY

